

Gramps

by Earth Star

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Summary: Hiccup and Toothless get caught in a storm and are forced to spend a night in a cave. They end up meeting a person Hiccup never thought he would meet.

Gramps

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****Gramps****

Hiccup was REALLY wishing he had just gone for a walk instead. He could have gone for a simple stroll around the island after the argument with his dad to cool, but NO! Hiccup had to take off on Toothless for some mindless flying. A great idea until the storm clouds came and it was ONLY then Hiccup recalled Bucket's foot hurting which mean a thunderstorm was coming.

Hiccup cursed as he tried to shield his face from the freezing rain and bone numbing wind. They needed to make a book out of Bucket's aches and pains. Tight bucket on the head meant blizzard and aching foot meant rainstorm, easy! But that didn't help him now. Hiccup didn't even know where he was.

Toothless growled unhappily as he struggled to flap his wings. "No choice, Bud!" Hiccup yelled. "We'll have to find shelter until this storm passes." _Dad's probably freaking out where I am and Astrid too for that matter._

Hiccup tried to see through the rain, but it was Toothless who spotted something and growled as he tilted his head. Hiccup could make out a tiny island through the mist and rain.

"Okay, we'll head there," Hiccup replied as Toothless had already started to fly towards it. "Let's hope there's a cave-"

A blast of wind cut Hiccup off and threw the two of them off balance. Toothless tried to regain control, but they were forced to tumble in the wind like a leaf. The world spun as they two of them plummeted to the island below.

Toothless wrapped his wings around Hiccup seconds before they ram into a tree. They tumbled on the ground and the last thought Hiccup had before he blacked out was that he REALLY should have taken a walk instead.

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Hiccup moaned as he stirred and expected to be freezing, but he was wrapped in thick furs and contently warm. Briefly, he thought he was back in his bed until his eyes blinked and Hiccup saw his pillow was very large, black and covered in scales.

"Hey, Toothless," Hiccup greeted as he sat up and Toothless raised his head to check him over. Hiccup glance at the fur and saw they were in a cave. "Where did you find the blanket, Bud?" Hiccup asked.

"That would be my contribution."

Hiccup jumped and looked ahead. A large viking sat while putting another log to a fire before attending to the fish he was cooking on the long sticks near it. He arms was covered in battle scars and there was a very visible one on his right cheek. The man had to be at least the size of Stoick, although with the grey hairs in his long beard he was clearly older than his father.

Hiccup backed up into Toothless as the man glanced over to him with a friendly smile. "Relax, Lad, I'm not going to hurt you or your beastie," the man pointed to Toothless. "You're large scaly friend there made it clear I'd lose an arm if I tried."

Toothless gave a protective snort, but lowered his head and wrapped his tail around his boy.

"Uh...okay," Hiccup said and wondered why the viking wasn't freaking out over the fact that Hiccup had a dragon with him.

"You're from Berk, aren't you?" the viking asked.

"Yes," Hiccup asked, unsure if he should admit it. For all he knew the guy was from the Berserkers or another enemy of Berk. They were still recovering from Dagur's last attack and trying to figure out the full peace terms with Alvin, last thing they needed was a surprise attack from a new threat.

The man chuckled. "Been a long time since I've seen Berk, best island in the world if I say so myself."

Hiccup found himself relaxing slightly. Okay, he highly doubt a Berserker or even an Outsider would talk so fondly of Berk. He stole a glance at Toothless who seemed close to taking a nap. Toothless certainly didn't feel the need to keep his guard up and he was the best judge of character.

"I'm no enemy," the man said like he was reading Hiccup's mind. "If I was was, I would have left you out in the cold and rain." He gestured to the mouth of the cave and Hiccup turned just as more thunder roared.

The man gave a low whistle. "Thor's having fun tonight it seems."

Hiccup nodded as he noticed how dark it was too. "How long was I out?"

"Few hours," the man replied. "And I doubt this storm will clear up before sunrise, so you might as well get comfortable."

"Yeah," Hiccup said with a sigh but then gave a half smile. "But thanks for saving me."

The man nodded as he rubbed his forearms. "Wasn't much, but your poor beastie was scared out of his wits."

Toothless growled.

"No, you were," the man argued. "You had no clue on what to do before I showed up."

Toothless eyes narrowed as he gave a pout which caused Hiccup to snicker. Okay, the guy was getting points for getting the offspring of death and lightening to pout like a little kid.

"What's your name, Lad?" the man asked as he plucked a fish off a stick and took a bit out of it.

"Hiccup," he replied as Toothless glanced up licking his lips at the fish.

"Ah," the man said with a nod. "Stoick's boy." He then took two fish and tossed it to Toothless. "Here beastie, rather you eat this than my arm."

Toothless caught the fish in midair and happily growled as he swallowed. The man laughed as he tossed one to Hiccup. "Here, you're too skinny for a boy your age," he chided.

"Um, thanks," Hiccup said as his own stomach growled. He'd forgotten he had left right before supper. "So, you know my dad?" Hiccup asked as he took a bite of the warm fish.

"Aye," the man said with a warm smile. "Since the day he was born."

That caused Hiccup to paused as he raised an eyebrow. He knew his dad that long? "Funny, cause Dad's never mention you...um...what is your name?"

"Just call me Gramps," the man said with a grin.

"Gramps?" Hiccup said with a raised eyebrow. "Any particular reason?"

"It amuses me," the old man said. "But, it's not like you owe me

anything, I only gave you shelter, probably saved your life, gave you food I could be eating myself-"

"Okay, okay," Hiccup said as he raised his hands and Toothless tucked his head into Hiccup's lap. "Enough with the guilt trip, I'll call you Gramps." Although, Hiccup didn't think wanting to hear an actual name wasn't that hard of a request.

'Gramps' only grinned as he rubbed his hands over the fire. "You remind me a lot of him."

Hiccup stroked Toothless's head. "Who?"

"Your father as a boy," Gramps said, with a nostalgic twinkle in his eye. "You're a lot like him."

Hiccup scoffed. The man's memory must be fading. "I find that very hard to believe."

"Well, not in appearance," Gramps replied gently. "But you have his stubbornness," he let out a low whistle. "Lost count on how many grey hairs that boy gave me. There were times I thought he would never live to be a man."

"Really?" Hiccup asked intrigued. Gobber had talked what his father had been like as a boy, but it was usually how strong he was or how he was about to break a tree trunk over his knee. Hiccup had never heard this version of him.

Gramps snorted. "Oh, Odin, the frights that boy gave me." He ran his hand through his beard and shut his eyes. "Your father was always so reckless, jumping into fights without a second thought on what to do," the old man said. "Took forever to knock common sense into him."

Hiccup frowned as he hugged his knees. "I guess a lot of fighting does that-"

"No, lad," the man replied. "I mean literally, I had him smash his head into boulders to learn control and patience." He gave a proud nod. "Managed to break a boulder in two."

"That...sounds very vikingish," Hiccup said and most amazingly he could believe it.

Gramps nodded. "I even told him, 'Someday, I hope you get a son that gives you just as many grey hairs as you gave me!'" He chuckled. "Never expected my 'curse' to actually happen," as he gently punched Hiccup in the shoulder.

Hiccup narrowed his eyes. The way Gramps was talking he sounded like he was his father's-

"With that said," Gramps continued interrupting Hiccup's train of thought. "Try not to be too hard on him. Fathers don't always see things the way their children do right away," he rubbed the back of his neck. "There are things I've wished I've done differently, but you can't go and change the past."

He leaned forward and offered Hiccup a smile. "Which is why you need

to do your best with the present." Gramps held up a finger. "Someday, you'll be valuing the time you had with your father, especially when he's not there any more."

Hiccup swallowed. It had scared him to the core when Dagur had captured his father. He had always been the one waiting for his dad to save him, but for once Hiccup had to go and rescue his father. Sure, he and the other kids had to go and rescue the adults from the Green Death, but that was for all of Berk. His dad was indestructible, at least that's how Hiccup had always thought him to be.

The notion that someone could kidnap Stoick the Vast so easily and possibly kill him had shaken Hiccup to the core. If that hadn't been scary enough, Hiccup was suddenly left and expected to be in charge, the whole village looking at him to be their leader. He hadn't been ready to be chief and he wasn't sure he ever would.

That what the fight had been about, Stoick wanting Hiccup to try to take up more chiefly duties around the island while Hiccup was insisting they needed to spend more time exploring. There was a lot of their world they didn't know about, and Hiccup rather have the knowledge to prepare themselves and Berk for it.

"It doesn't happen all at once you know," Gramps said as he awoke Hiccup from his thoughts. "Being chief, you'll find your own way to ease into it. Every chief had their own way of running things." He gave a smile. "Your dad runs Berk very differently from when I was there."

Hiccup raised an eyebrow. "What do you mean?"

"When I was there, we use to have large walls encircling the village," Gramps said. "But your dad had them taken down since he saw they were more of a fire hazard than a help. Also, didn't keep live dragons to train new and young vikings. In my day, you learned as you went." He leaned back and stared into the fire. "Your father changes things for the better in the time of war, just as you'll change things better in times of peace."

Hiccup scoffed. How could this man be so sure? He didn't even know Hiccup. "I seriously doubt that."

"No, you'll see, you just need confidence, Lad," he gave a grin. "Just like I did when I was your age, but it'll come. You'll see."

Hiccup couldn't hold back the smile. There was something oddly comforting about Gramps and as he looked at him, he suddenly felt like he had seen him somewhere before.

Gramps yawned as he gazed out into the rain. "Why don't you go to sleep, I'll keep watch."

"Um, you sure?" Hiccup asked. Didn't seem right to leave the old man awake.

"It's fine," Gramps said. "I wasn't planning on sleeping tonight anyway. Get some sleep."

"Um, okay and thanks, Gramps," Hiccup chewed his bottom lip. "For everything."

Gramps gave the same proud smile Hiccup had seen on Stoick in the past. "Believe me, Lad, it was a gift just to be able to talk to you."

Hiccup briefly pondered what he meant by that, but decided to drop it as he laid back against Toothless and borrowed into the blanket. He then heard Gramps whistled the same tune his father had sung to Hiccup when he had been small and couldn't sleep.

The boy shut his eyes and let the familiar tune lure him to sleep.

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When Hiccup had awoke, he was shocked to find Gramps had disappeared. No footprints, no note, nothing of him had been left behind. If it weren't for the leftover ashes from the fire, Hiccup would have thought he had dreamt the whole thing.

He was pleased to see the skies were cleared once again. Once he checked around and still hadn't found Gramps, he decided it was time to head home. However, Gramps disappearance bothered him on the flight back. Where did he go? He seemed to like Hiccup, so why didn't he leave a note? He hoped the old viking wasn't in trouble.

He debated about going back later with Astrid to check again as Berk came into view and landed in the middle of village.

Astrid dropped the bucket she was carrying and rushed over. "Hiccup!" she cried as she pulled him into a hug and then promptly punching him hard in the arm.

"Ow! " Hiccup protested.

"That was for scaring me," Astrid chided. "Where have you been? We were worried-"

"I know, I'm sorry," Hiccup replied as he rubbed his arm. "We got caught in the rain and spent a night in a cave until it cleared up this morning."

He was about to mention Gramps when Astrid turned him around and pointed to the great hall. "You better go see your dad, he was starting to plan a search party for you."

"Okay, got it," Hiccup said as he headed towards it with Toothless close behind. "I'll fill you in on the details later."

Hiccup rushed up the steps and pushed the doors opened. "Dad?!" he called.

Stoick and Gobber looked up from the table. "Hiccup!" Stoick exclaimed as he rushed over and engulfed into a tight hug.

"Dad, need a little air," Hiccup said as Stoick eased his grip.

"You scared me half to death," Stoick started. "Do you have any idea

how many grey hairs I've gotten last night. I-" He shook his head. "Nevermind, I'm glad you're alright, Son, but where were you?"

"Toothless and I got caught up in the storm and spent a night on a little island west of here."

"Island in the west?" Gobber muttered and nodded. "Oh, might be that old fishing spot your dad use to take us, eh Stoick?"

Stoick blinked and gave an old nod. "Aye, I've forgotten about that spot."

Gobber then coughed as he glanced to both father and son. "Well, since my day has now be cleared up from search party duties, I got some work to do." He patted Hiccup on the shoulder before turning to leave.

Hiccup sighed as he looked to his father. "Dad, look, about the fight-"

"I know," Stoick said with a nod. "I'm sorry too." He shook his head. "How about a compromise and we'll discuss it over breakfast. Did you eat yet?"

"No" Hiccup said as his dad lead him to the table. "Oh, and last night I meet a guy who said he knew-"

Hiccup trailed off as he spotted the portraits of the viking chiefs with their sons in the past. It was the one that was right before his and Stoick's that caught his eye. He had seen the painting countless times growing up, but now he was frozen to the spot.

His grandfather had looked a bit different, no grey hair in his beard and no scar on his cheek but there was no doubt in Hiccup's mind. The man in the painting was the same man he had spent the night with last night.

Somehow, Hiccup had dinner with a ghost. His eyes widened as he glanced to Toothless who had come to the same conclusion and was equally stunned.

"Son? Something wrong?" Stoick asked, concerned.

Hiccup ran a hand through his hair as he collected himself. "Dad, by any chance did Grandpa have you smash a boulder with your head once as a kid?"

"Aye," Stoick said with a nod. "When I was your age. Why? Is Gobber telling stories about me behind my back again?"

"Yeah, Gobber," Hiccup said with a forced laugh. "It was all Gobber." Stoick stared suspiciously, but then pushed Hiccup along. "Come on, let's get something to eat."

Hiccup nodded as he stole one more glance at the portrait and then back to his father.

"Hey, Dad," Hiccup said slowly. "Um...think tonight you can tell me a bit about Grandpa?"

Stoick paused as he glanced back with a curious expression. "I can, but I've told you about him-

"I was thinking more on what he was like besides that he wrestled two gronkles to the ground," Hiccup said, dryly.

Stoick looked ready to debate but then frowned as he ran a hand through his beard. "Aye, suppose that is all I've said about him isn't it, but why the sudden interest?"

Hiccup glanced back to the portrait and then to Toothless who was giving a bemused grin. "Well, I suddenly wish I got to know him, that's all." Hiccup wasn't quite sure how his father would react if he confessed he just realized he had spent the night with the ghost of his dead grandfather.

Stoick looked to the portrait and gave a nod. "Aye, we can do that," he gave a light chuckle. "He would have liked you, Son. You have the stubbornness our family is known for."

Hiccup gave a smile back and somehow knew his grandfather was feeling quite proud for the both of them.

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